

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2339

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 5598

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, VIGNES, ALBERTO J., AR

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON EX-FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES

REFS: 1. BA 5441, 2. BA 5501, 3. STATE 192555

1. AS I HAD PROPOSED REFTELS, MRS.HILL AND I CALLED ON EX-FOREIGN MIN AND MRS. VIGNES AT THEIR APARTMENT EVENING OF AUG 19. VIGNES APPEARED VERY FIT, CORDIAL, AND ENTIRELY AT EASE. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR VISIT AND THEN ASKED ME IF I HAD ANY WORD FOR HIM FROM DR. KISSINGER. I REPLIED THAT THE SECRETARY HAD ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS AND MRS. KISSINGER'S VERY BEST WISHES TO MIN AND MRS. VIGNES. HE RESPONDED THAT HE ASSUMED THE SECRETARY WOULD SOON ANSWER HIS CABLE IN WRITING. POINTING WITH PRIDE TO AN AUTOGRAPHED PHOTO OF PRESIDENT FORD AND FAMILY WHICH HE HAD RECEIVED JUST FOUR DAYS PREVIOUSLY, VIGNES SAID HE HOPED TO RECEIVE BOTH AN AUTOGRAPHED PHOTO AND LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY. I EXPLAINED THAT THE SECRETARY WAS EXTREMELY INVOLVED WITH HIS MIDDLE EAST TRIP AND THAT HE MIGHT FIND IT DIFFICULT TO FIND TIME TO WRITE PERSONALLY, BUT THAT I WOULD PASS ON VIGNES'S REQUEST.

2. VIGNES ADVISED ME THAT HE INTENDED TO REMAIN ACTIVE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOLLOWING A SHORT REST HERE IN BUENOS AIRES AND AT HIS ESTANCIA. HE SAID HE HAD NO INTEREST IN BEING AMBASSADOR TO PARIS, AS IS PRESENTLY BEING RUMORED IN THE PRESS. HIS INTEREST, HE SAID, WAS IN THE "POWER STRUCTURE OF THE WORLD", AND HE WISHES TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH GENERAL INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

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HE INDICATED THAT A POSITION SUCH AS LATIN AMERICAN SPOKESMAN

IN A EUROPEAN BASED INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION WOULD BE ONE IN WHICH HE COULD CONTRIBUTE EFFECTIVELY. EXPANDING ON THAT THESES, HE SAID THAT WITH AMB ORFILA IN THE OAS AND HIMSELF IN EUROPE "WORKING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER", WESTERN INFLUENCE WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHENED. WHEN I ASKED IF HE HAD ANY INTEREST IN THE UNITED NATIONS, HE ANSWERED AROUND THE QUESTION, SAYING THAT HE WAS STUDYING ENGLISH INTENSIVELY AND EXPECTED TO PERFECT IT IN TWO MONTHS. HE OBSERVED THAT HE SPEAKS FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH FLUENTLY AND THAT HE IS COMPETENT IN PORTUGUESE AND ITALIAN.

3. REGARDING HIS FORCED DEPARTURE FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, VIGNES SAID THAT HIS POLITICAL ENEMIES HAD FINALLY BROUGHT HIM DOWN. HE DENIED THAT THERE WAS ANY TRUTH WHATSOEVER IN THE FRAUD AND MALFEASANCE CHARGES BROUGHT BY THAT "COMMUNIST" DEPUTY PORTO. AS EVIDENCE THAT HIS FELLOW COUNTRYMEN SUPPORTED HIM, HE TOLD ME OF HAVING RECEIVED HUNDREDS OF LETTERS EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR HIS VALUABLE SERVICE FOR HIS COUNTRY.

4. VIGNES DESCRIBED HIS CONCERN OVER THE STRONG INROADS THE COMMUNISTS ARE MAKING HERE, AND OPINED THAT UNLESS THE "LAZY GOT BUSY" THE IDEOLOGICAL LEFT MIGHT WELL TAKE OVER THE COUNTRY. THE MAJOR PROBLEM FACING ARGENTINA, HE SAID, IS NOT ECONOMIC BUT RATHER FINANCIAL. HE STRESSED THAT U.S. INTEREST AND HELP TO RESOLVE THAT PROBLEM IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE IF ARGENTINA IS NOT TO GO THE WAY OF CHILE WITH ALLENDE.

5. COMMENTING ON HIS SUCCESSOR, VIGNES NOTED THAT MIN ROBLEDO WAS NOT IN GOOD HEALTH, AND HE WAS NOT CERTAIN ROBLEDO WOULD BE ABLE TO STAND THE DEMANDING PACE OF THE OFFICE. HE EXPRESSED HIS HOPE THAT ARGENTINA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER ROBLEDO WOULD REMAIN AS CLOSE AND FRIENDLY TO THE U.S. AS IT HAD BEEN DURING HIS TENURE.

6. ON TAKING OUR LEAVE AFTER THE FIFTY-MINUTE VISIT, VIGNES GAVE ME A BIG ABRAZO AND REITERATED HIS APPRECIATION FOR MY CALL, NOTING THAT HE RECOGNIZED HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS FOR ME TO CALL ON HIM AT THIS TIME. HE SAID HE WOULD BE INVITING MRS. HILL AND ME TO DINNER AT HIS APARTMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE ASKED ONCE AGAIN THAT I SEND HIS WARMEST
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REGARDS TO HIS FRIEND SECRETARY KISSINGER.
HILL

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